

Formato: Comunicação Oral apresentada em Conferência

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**UNDERSTANDING ONLINE VICTIMIZATION: AN ANALYSIS OF
ROUTINES ACTIVITIES THEORY VALUE IN EXPLAINING ONLINE
VICTIMIZATION**

**EU Kids Online Conference 2011: Children, risk and safety online:
Research and policy challenges in comparative perspective**

London School of Economics, London, 22-23 September

Language: English

Abstract:

Introduction: In the past ten years, research on adolescent use of new technologies has demonstrated that the use of Internet and other means of information and communication by youth have increased drastically, mostly in what refers itself to the use of the various means of communication available. This type of social technology enables youngsters to expand their social circles and improve their ability to communicate with friends and family. Besides, the Internet is an undeniably valuable educational and entertaining resource. Nevertheless, all these benefits have a downside since they also create a new and mostly unregulated environment that exposes children to a multiplicity of risks: violence, bullying, misinformation, sexual predators, amongst others. Although the research in this area has also increased, the results available are mostly descriptive and lack a critical perspective on understanding the likelihood of online victimization. To address this need, we recur to the routine activities theory which has proved itself to be useful in explaining different types of criminal victimization. This theory states that there are three components necessary in a situation to a crime to occur: a suitable target, a motivated offender and the lack of capable guardian.

Objective: The current research intends to examine the routine activities consistency in explaining adolescent likelihood to online victimization, expecting to provide a contribution to literature in this area, considering the overall lack of explanatory research on this theme. In order to accomplish a wider and more comprehensive view of this phenomenon, we have made a cross cultural comparison between Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Methodology: To achieve our goals, we have developed a questionnaire (Online Victimization Assessment) consisted by 78 items that evaluate sociodemographic characteristics, online behaviors, parental supervision and rules about online activities, exposure to cyberbullying, cyberstalking, sexual solicitations, offline meeting, commercial risks, access to sites with inappropriate content and personal information misuse. This questionnaire was applied to a representative sample of youngsters from ten to eighteen years old, from Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Results: Achieved results indicate the applicability of this theory in understanding online victimization. Data analysis showed that adolescent who had online behaviors that increased exposure to motivated offenders, seem to also been victim from, at least, one type of risk; concerning target suitability, adolescents engaged in online activities such communicating with people online, giving out personal information, etc., also have been victims and regarding the lack of capable guardianship, we see that youngsters who have no parental supervision or rules about their activities online, are more likely to see themselves involved in online risks.

- **Keywords:** Online Risks, Routine Activities Theory, Victimization

Understanding Online Victimization:

An analysis of routines activities theory value in explaining online victimization

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Objectives

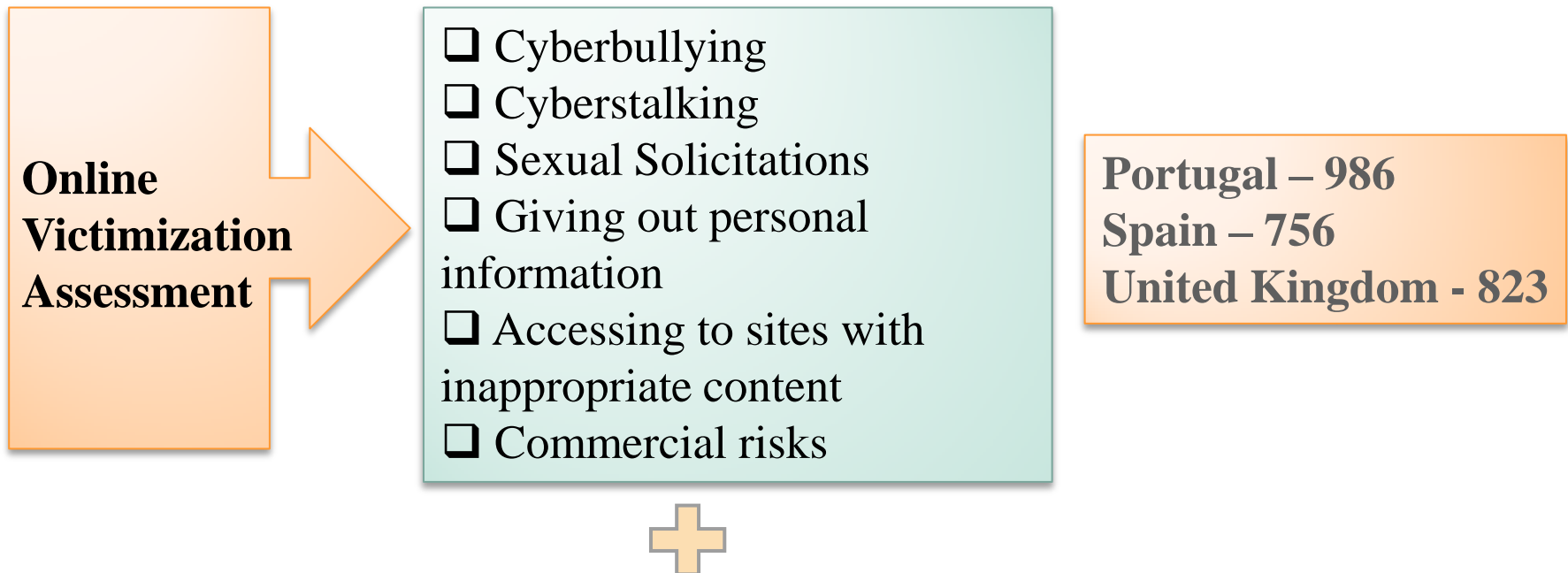


**Analyze routines
activities theory
value in explaining
online victimization**

Reflect on their experiences
with online victimization,
through variables representing
the three constructs of
Routine Activities Theory.



Instruments and Procedures



Sociodemographic characteristics;
Online behaviors;
Parental supervision and rules about online activities

Sample

Portugal



Sex

Male: 55,27 %

Female: 44,73%

Age

10 - 18

Computer

1,6% does not have

Cellular Phone

0.81% does not have

Spain



Sex

50,40%

49,60%

Age

10 - 18

Computer

1.19% does not have

Cellular Phone

1.45% does not have

United Kingdom



Sex

48,60%

51,40%

Age

10 - 18

Computer

1.45% does not have

Cellular Phone

1.59% does not have

Results

Analyze routines activities theory value in explaining online victimization



Behaviors related with online privacy (personal information given on social networks, chat rooms, etc)



Target suitability

Types of activities developed online and time spent online (socializing with others,; research for school; research related with personal tastes; download music, images; shopping; etc)

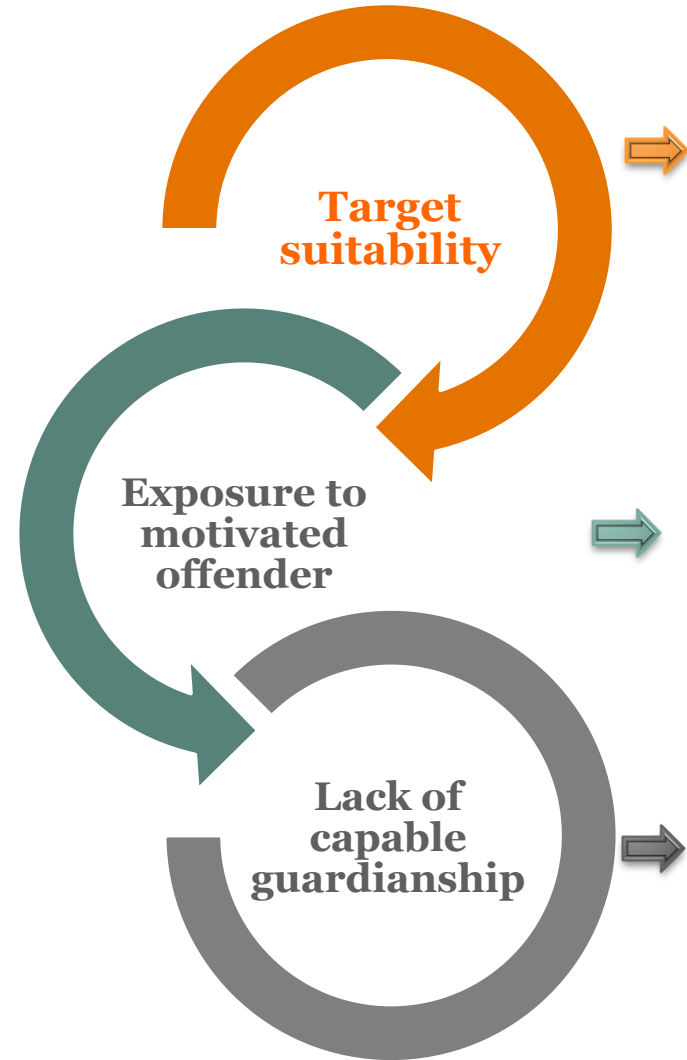


Exposure to motivated offender

Monitoring and protective measures (protection software, rules on online activities, presence of a guardian on the room, time spent online, etc)



Lack of capable guardianship



Results

Analyze routines activities theory value in explaining online victimization

Target
suitability

Giving Personal Information

PT	First name*
	First and last name
	Age
	ID Number
	Nationality
	Address
SP	Describe physical appearance**
	Hobbies, tastes, interests and opinions**
	Names of people / friends with whom they relate
U.K.	Places that they usually attend**
	Share photos**
	Account number or credit card

I lie about it

I give the real
one

I don't give
that
information

No significant differences between
countries, but...

Results

Analyze routines activities theory value in explaining online victimization



Online Activities		
	PT	SP UK
To visit sites		To participate in forums or discussion groups
To consult and send e-mails		To participate in social networks
To use an instant messaging program*		To create my own website or blog where I can share my tastes and opinions
To participate in chat rooms **		To download music
To find information about my tastes and interests		To download photos
To find information about school works		To download movies and TV series
To consult the virtual school platform		To download software (computer programs)
To buy things (tickets, music, books, etc.)		To play online with other people
To use sites like YouTube to share photos, videos, movies, etc.		To see the news
To make or receive calls over the Internet		

Results

Analyze routines activities theory value in explaining online victimization



Supervision of Online Activities

No Rules **

Computer located in the room **

Computer located in a common area

Do parents know how to work with a computer

Protection software

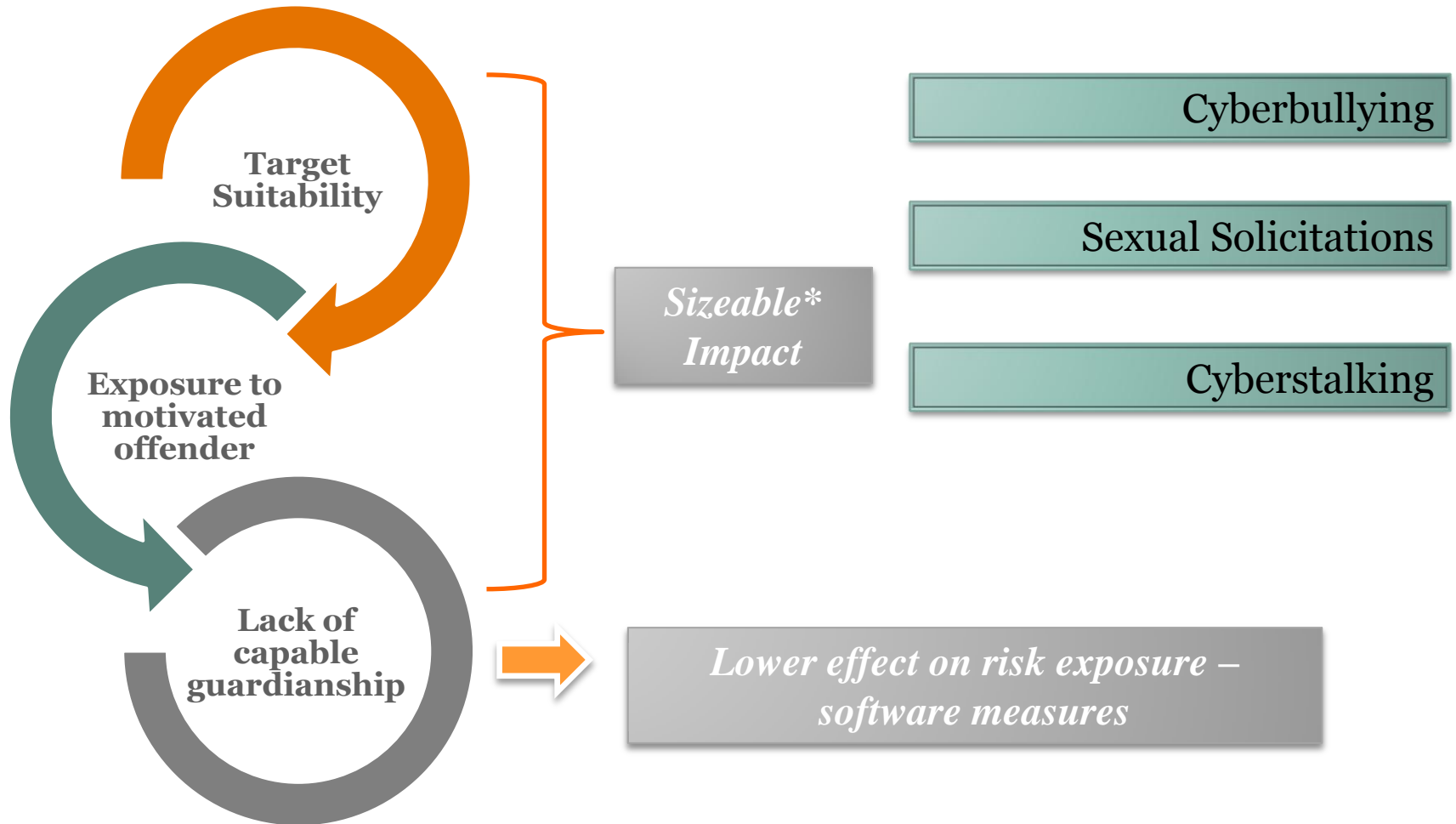
Are you usually alone when you're online **

Are your parents present when you're online?

**No significant differences between
countries, but...**

Results

Analyze routines activities theory value in explaining online victimization



Discussion and final reflections

- Although we can't find significant differences between countries, U.K. children are more conscious about the possible outcomes of their online behaviors and feel there is more control over their online activities at home rather than in school.
 - Examination of data showed that increased target suitability had a large impact on the likelihood of victimization, as well as the increased exposure to motivated offenders and lack of a capable guardian
 - Validity of the theory in explaining Online Victimization
- BUT...**
- Lack of a capable guardian (not only protective software but rules and parents presence)

Thank You!

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